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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council decides on Sunday that compliance with NATO ultimatum on heavy weapons in and around Sarajevo makes use of air strikes unnecessary at present; 2,500 more troops needed, to maintain UNPROFOR effort in Sarajevo and to possibly extend weapons control to other "safe areas".

+ Secretary-General condemns assassination yesterday of Rwandese Minister of Public Works and Energy in Kigali; says murder could threaten ongoing efforts in Rwanda to establish broad-based transitional government.

+ Preparations for elections in El Salvador, scheduled for 20 March, are progressing without major problems, despite acts of political violence and intimidation last year, Secretary-General reports.

+ Humanitarian and human rights conditions in Haiti have seriously deteriorated, Secretary-General writes to Security Council; Special Representative Dante Caputo tells press that significant agreement has been reached on ways to break political impasse.

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The Security Council decided on Sunday -- in coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) -- not to carry out air strikes at this time against Serbian weapons emplacements in and around Sarajevo. The Council met at the request of the Russian Federation, with the NATO deadline for withdrawal of heavy weapons scheduled for midnight that night. Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Affairs, Kofi Annan, told the Council that according to the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia and the commanders of NATO and United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Serbian compliance with the ultimatum had been effective. Certain weapons on both the Serb and Muslim sides had not been removed from the exclusion zone, but they would be monitored in place by UNPROFOR.

Mr. Annan also asked Member States to contribute an additional 2,500 troops with equipment, to facilitate in the monitoring of the weapons

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withdrawal and cease-fire in and around Sarajevo. He said troops had been redeployed for that purpose from other parts of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they were still needed in those areas.

A United Nations spokesman said today that Mr. Annan had had held meetings over the weekend with troop-contributing countries. Speaking on the Secretary-General's behalf, he underlined "in the strongest possible terms" the need for more troops for UNPROFOR. The figures, he said, were dangerously low before the current situation arose, much lower than the Security Council had authorized for protection of the United Nations-designated "safe areas". He stressed the need for greater numbers, particularly if UNPROFOR was to move into areas other than Sarajevo to try to halt the fighting and shelling, as was now being discussed. "We simply can't do it with the military assets we now have on the ground," he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has condemned the assassination yesterday of Felicien Gatabazi, the Minister of Public Works and Energy of Rwanda, in the capital, Kigali. According to a United Nations spokesman, he said the murder threatened to complicate the ongoing efforts in Rwanda to establish a broad-based transitional government. He urged all concerned to make every effort to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice as soon as possible.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali called upon all the parties in Rwanda to exercise maximum restraint and to redouble their efforts to fully implement the Arusha Peace Agreement without further delay.

The Security Council last week expressed concern at delays in implementing the Arusha Agreement and at the deteriorating security situation, particularly in Kigali. It said that installing a broad-based transitional government, as provided for in the terms of the Agreement, would also help stem the deterioration in the country's humanitarian situation.

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Despite some incidents of political violence in El Salvador, preparations for the country's elections on 20 March are proceding smoothly, according to a report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), dated 16 February (S/1994/179). He said that ONUSAL teams, after attending some 200 events since the electoral campaign opened officially on 20 November, had not come across any major problems. Compliance with the electoral norms must be improved, but campaign activities were proceeding without serious incidents.

It was encouraging to note, he said, that the frequency of acts of political violence had diminished during December and January. The Joint Group for the investigation of politically motivated illegal armed groups, established at the United Nations' initiative, was already meeting and discharging its mandate, and the acts of violence and intimidation which took

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place late last year seemed to have not affected the relatively normal climate in which the electoral process was unfolding.

The Secretary-General observed that it was to the credit of the Salvadorian people and their leaders of all persuasions that they were able to overcome the obstacles presented by the country's long internal conflict and harsh environment of crime and unemployment, and to advance to the stage of holding elections. Further difficulties must be expected, he warned, but it was to be hoped they would be few and of little importance.

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The situation in Haiti has seriously deteriorated, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 20 February, he said that his Special Representative for Haiti, Dante Caputo, had reported to him that the Haitian people were under severe strain, notwithstanding efforts to maintain the flow of humanitarian assistance to them, and that the human rights situation had also deteriorated.

He went on to say that a nucleus of the joint United Nations-Organization of American States human rights monitoring mission (MICIVIH) had remained in the capital, Port-au-Prince, ever since the evacuation of the bulk of its personnel last October. Recently, a small number of human rights observers returned to Haiti from the Dominican Republic in the hope that they could resume their tasks, but had been able to do very little. He said that without progress towards a political settlement of the crisis, it would be difficult for him to recommend that MICIVIH should be maintained indefinitely in Haiti.

Mr. Caputo told the press at Headquarters today that a three-day conference in Miami in mid-January, convened to find ways to break the present impasse in Haiti, had recommended to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide that he start the procedure for the nomination of a new prime minister and the formation of a government of national unity. In the past two weeks, Mr. Caputo continued, talks had been held with a group of Parliamentarians from Haiti, including some of the "toughest opponents of President Aristide". The Secretary-General had received a letter on Saturday from the group, signed by representatives of both sides of the conflict, saying that they agreed to the plan presented by the Miami conference, and to the passing as soon as possible of the necessary legislation, within the requirements of the Governors Island Agreement. While this was not a total solution to the crisis, he said, it did represent significant progress.

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